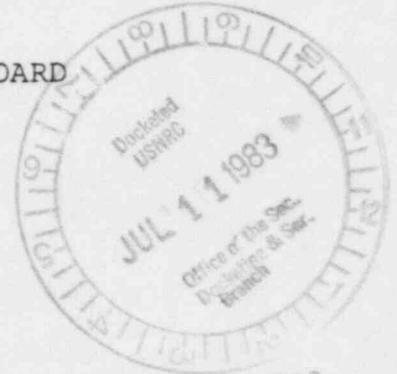


UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
NUCLEAR REGULATORY COMMISSION

ATOMIC SAFETY AND LICENSING APPEAL BOARD

Administrative Judges:

Thomas S. Moore, Chairman
Dr. W. Reed Johnson
Dr. Reginald L. Gotchy



SERVED JUL 11 1983

In the Matter of)

WISCONSIN ELECTRIC POWER COMPANY)

(Point Beach Nuclear Plant, Unit 1))

) Docket No. 50-266 OLA-2
)
)

MEMORANDUM AND ORDER

July 8, 1983

On March 22, 1983, we issued an order in this case requesting that the applicant provide us with answers to certain specific questions with respect to the proposed steam generator replacement. We there explained that the documents available to us did not provide sufficient information to allow an evaluation of particular aspects of the proposed replacement, and expressed the expectation that the responses to our questions would enable us to determine what, if any, further action on our part was warranted.

Order of March 22, 1983 (unpublished) at 2, 3.

The applicant filed a timely response to our request, a document of some 35 pages, in which it addressed each of our

questions.¹ The questions generally were designed to ascertain whether certain factors had been taken into account in the design of the replacement steam generators, and applicant's responses indicate that indeed they were. Further, for the most part, our evaluation of the responses tends to affirm applicant's position, i.e., that the design of the replacement steam generators is such as to reduce the potential for tube failure relative to the original generators. Therefore we do not believe any further formal action on our part is called for. One matter, however, deserves further attention by the staff.

At page 21 of the response, in a section that deals with the efficacy of eddy current inspection, the applicant acknowledges that, using the standard eddy current probe and multifrequency testing techniques, it would be difficult to detect degradation in the critical transition region of fully expanded tubes due to the change in tube diameter at that location. To address this deficiency the applicant would, prior to operation of the steam generator, establish a baseline eddy current "signature" in the transition

¹ Some of the information we requested can be found in Amendment 1 of the Steam Generator Repair Report (e.g., Section 2.2.1.3, pp. 2-8, 2-8A, 2-8B). This report was made available to the staff (and the intervenors) on March 1, 1983, but we were not served with a copy. Since the Amendment was referenced in the applicant's response, we subsequently obtained a copy from the staff.

region. The applicant would then compare that preoperational signature with eddy current test data obtained in inspections of the same tube region made subsequent to operation of the generator. The applicant expects that tube degradation in the transition region would be detectable as a change from the baseline data. Should degradation be detected by this comparison, additional (and more sophisticated) eddy current techniques could then be used to determine the exact extent of that degradation. Applicant's Response (Apr. 27, 1983) at 21-22.

No further information is provided regarding the validity of the expectation that the comparison of an eddy current run with baseline data will effectively identify a degraded tube. Nor does the applicant's response indicate what size a defect would have to be in order to be detected by this screening process.

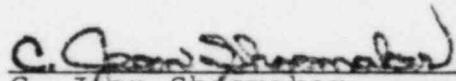
We believe that this is a matter which the NRC staff should explore, if they have not already done so.² Clearly the detection and sizing of steam generator tube defects is a vital step in assuring the integrity of the primary coolant boundary. The eddy current testing techniques

² The applicant points out that there are several operating plants that have the fully expanded tube steam generators (Response at p. 16). Presumably the concerns we express here have been addressed and resolved with respect to these plants.

employed and the concomitant Technical Specifications for the plant should be sufficient to ensure early detection and repair (e.g., by tube plugging) of significant degradation. The staff should assure itself that the testing techniques described by the applicant are indeed efficacious in this regard. We request that the staff inform us of its assessment of this matter, as soon as is practicable.³

It is so ORDERED.

FOR THE APPEAL BOARD


C. Jean Shoemaker
Secretary to the
Appeal Board

³ We also deny Decade's May 6, 1983 request that it be allowed access to allegedly proprietary information contained in the applicant's response. Decade is not, and has never been, a party to this proceeding. This being so it is precluded from access to the proprietary information it seeks. See 10 CFR § 2.790(b)(6). The fact that Decade has filed with the Commission a petition for review of the denial of its intervention petition (see ALAB-719, 17 NRC ___ (Mar. 22, 1983), aff'g, LBP-82-108, 16 NRC ___ (Dec. 10, 1982)) does not by itself endow Decade with party status.